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President: Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 80

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General (A/63/276)

Draft resolution (A/63/L.6)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to introduce the report of the Agency for 2007, which has been transmitted to the General Assembly by the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/63/276.

Mr. ElBaradei (International Atomic Energy Agency): We meet at a time of heightened anxiety and insecurity in the world. The global financial crisis is hitting rich and poor countries alike, but the poorest of the poor — the so-called bottom billion — are particularly vulnerable. Concern about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the possibility of extremist groups getting hold of nuclear or radioactive material has not diminished in the 12 months since I last spoke to the General Assembly.

The work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is at the nexus of development and security. In that context, I will give the Assembly an update on the Agency's work over the past year and highlight some of the challenges that need to be addressed.

The Agency's work in technical cooperation is sometimes seen — wrongly — as an adjunct to our real work in nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. That is unfortunate. Technical cooperation should not be seen as part of a political balance between the development and other activities of the Agency. Our role as a development agency is as important as anything else we do. To that end, we have established effective partnerships with agencies such as the World Health Organization and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. Thanks to those partnerships, many thousands of people receive radiation therapy for cancer, grow higher-yielding food crops and have access to clean drinking water.

In the past year, the surge in global food prices has pushed millions of people deeper into poverty and hunger. That clearly increases the importance of the work done by the IAEA to boost food supplies and combat pests and animal diseases. In some areas, the IAEA role is unique. For example, the best technology for mapping water resources cannot be deployed without the IAEA because it involves nuclear techniques.

A recent World Bank report showed that some 1.4 billion people in the developing world live on less than $1.25 per day. The number of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa has nearly doubled since 1981 to around 380 million. The international community has a responsibility to ensure that those people and others like them are not cut off from technologies that will accelerate economic development and help to ensure that their basic needs are met.

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Energy is the engine of development. Nearly every aspect of development requires reliable access to modern energy services. The global energy imbalance remains dramatic. The developed countries that make up the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development consume electricity on average at a per capita rate of 8,600 kilowatt-hours per year — roughly 170 times more than is consumed in Africa. It is understandable that many developing countries, therefore, should see nuclear power as a key source of the energy they need to lift their people out of poverty.

Nuclear power is undergoing something of a renaissance. That is a remarkable development. Just 10 years ago, nuclear power had stopped growing in the developed countries and its future globally looked uncertain as fears about safety were predominant. Now it is seen as offering part of the solution to surging global demand for energy, uncertainty about energy supply and concern about climate change. In the past two years, some 50 Member States have expressed interest in considering the possible introduction of nuclear power and asked for Agency support. Twelve of those countries are actively preparing to introduce nuclear power. Increased demand for assistance has been particularly strong from developing countries.

There are now 439 nuclear power reactors operating in 30 countries and the number of new plants under construction stands at 36. The IAEA advises countries considering the introduction of nuclear power, helping them to identify their options and the best energy mix for them. To ensure that newcomers use nuclear energy efficiently, safely, securely and with minimal proliferation risk, we impress upon them the need to plan properly, to build the human resources and infrastructure, to establish independent and effective regulators and to adhere to international safety, security and non-proliferation instruments. We offer advice in drafting national nuclear legislation and we train regulators and operators.

Above all, we stress that the primary responsibility to ensure safety and security lies with the countries concerned. However, we also make the companies and countries that supply the equipment and expertise aware of their responsibility. That is because failures of either safety or security can have consequences stretching well beyond national borders, as the Chernobyl accident demonstrated. Recipients and suppliers alike of nuclear technology owe a duty of care to the world at large.

Overall, safety is much better than it was 10 years ago, but vulnerabilities remain. We can never be complacent about safety. A single nuclear accident anywhere in the world could undermine the future of nuclear energy everywhere, so it is in all our interests to ensure that the highest safety standards be upheld everywhere.

One implication of a nuclear renaissance is the spread of nuclear material to many more countries. That naturally increases the risk that nuclear material could be diverted to make nuclear weapons. It is worth noting that countries that master uranium enrichment and plutonium separation become de facto nuclear-weapons-capable States. That means they have the ability to develop nuclear weapons in a very short time if they walked out of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), or managed to do so in a clandestine manner. That is clearly too narrow a margin of security. Those countries may genuinely have no intention today of ever making nuclear weapons, but that can change in a short time if their perception of the risks to their national security changes. And as we know, security perceptions can change very rapidly.

That is why we need to think seriously about some form of multinational control over the fuel cycle. It should provide assurance that every country that wants nuclear energy and is in compliance with its safeguards obligations has guaranteed access to a supply of nuclear fuel that will not be interrupted for political reasons. I first made that proposal five years ago. Several ideas have been put forward since then on developing a new, multilateral framework for the nuclear fuel cycle. That could be done, obviously, in different ways, but, I believe that any such framework must be global and non-discriminatory.

The ideal scenario, in my opinion, would be to start with a nuclear fuel bank under IAEA auspices. Then we should agree that all new enrichment and reprocessing activities should be placed exclusively under multilateral control. Ultimately, all existing facilities should also be converted from national to multilateral control. That is a bold agenda and it is clearly not going to happen overnight, but bold measures, including controlling the spread of sensitive nuclear technology, are vital if we are ever going to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and succeed in eliminating them altogether. However, make no mistake — any mechanism that smacks of inequality or dependency will never get off the ground.

The possibility of terrorists obtaining nuclear or other radioactive material remains a grave threat. The number of incidents reported to the Agency involving the theft or loss of nuclear or radioactive material is disturbingly high — nearly 250 in the year to June 2008 alone. Equally troubling is the fact that much of that material is not subsequently recovered. Sometimes material is found which had not been reported missing. The Agency helps countries improve their border controls, strengthen the physical protection of nuclear material and radioactive sources, and enhance nuclear security at major public events, such as the Beijing Olympic Games this summer.

Effective nuclear verification requires four essential elements: adequate legal authority, state-of-the-art technology, timely access to all relevant information, and sufficient human and financial resources. Despite some progress, we still have shortcomings in all four areas. With respect to legal authority, it has been over 10 years since the Model Additional Protocol was approved by the IAEA Board of Governors. Of the 163 States with safeguards agreements, only 88 now have additional protocols in force — not much more than half.

It is also disconcerting that 30 States party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have not even brought into force their required comprehensive safeguards agreements with the Agency. As I have said repeatedly, without safeguards agreements, the Agency cannot provide any assurance about a State's nuclear activities, and without additional protocols we cannot provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

Concerning the technological aspect of our work, to take just one example, we remain uncomfortably dependent in our verification work on satellite imagery and environmental sampling analysis provided by Member States. We clearly need a minimum independent capability to ensure our credibility.

Earlier this month, the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea briefly withheld access to the Yongbyon nuclear facilities from our inspectors, who had been monitoring and verifying the shutdown of the facilities. Access was subsequently restored following an agreement between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on a verification protocol. I naturally still hope that conditions can be created for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the NPT soon and for the resumption by the Agency of comprehensive safeguards.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Six years have elapsed since the Agency began working to clarify Iran's nuclear programme. Substantial progress has been made under a workplan agreed with Iran to clarify outstanding issues, including, importantly, the nature of Iran's enrichment activities. The Agency has been able to continue to verify the non-diversion of declared nuclear material in Iran.

However, I regret that we are still not in a position to achieve full clarity regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran. That is because the Agency has not been able to make substantive progress on the alleged studies and associated questions relevant to possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme.

I reiterate that the Agency does not in any way seek to pry into Iran's conventional or missile-related military activities. Our focus is clearly on nuclear material and activities. I am confident that arrangements can be developed which will enable the Agency to clarify the remaining issues while ensuring that Iran's legitimate right to protect the confidentiality of sensitive information and activities is respected. I therefore urge Iran to implement all the transparency measures required to build confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme at an early date. That will be good for Iran, good for the Middle East region and good for the world.

I have often expressed concern that the Agency lacks sufficient legal authority and adequate resources to do its job properly. Last year, I appointed an independent Commission of Eminent Persons to examine our work and make recommendations for the future of the Agency up to 2020 and beyond. The Commission, chaired by the former President of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo, produced its report earlier this year. Its recommendations make compelling reading. I will highlight a few of them.

First, the Commission says that the Agency, working with supplier and donor States, should help "newcomer" States to put in place the necessary infrastructure to launch nuclear energy programmes

safely, securely and peacefully. The Agency should also give high priority to establishing multilateral fuel cycle arrangements, covering everything from assurance of supply of nuclear fuel to waste disposal.

Secondly, the Commission says our Technical Cooperation Programme, focusing on using nuclear applications in food and agriculture, human health and natural resources, needs to be significantly expanded. Technical cooperation funds continue to lag well behind the pressing needs of developing countries.

Thirdly, in order to help address the threat of nuclear terrorism, the Commission urges Member States to negotiate binding agreements — not voluntary, as at present — to set effective global nuclear security standards and to give the Agency the resources and authority to help ensure they are implemented.

Fourthly, the Commission proposes that the Agency should lead an international effort to establish a global nuclear safety network, also based on binding agreements. Countries should submit to mandatory international nuclear safety peer reviews.

Fifthly, the Agency's safeguards activities should be strengthened. That means better tools, more human and financial resources, as well as more legal authority. On safeguards, I should note that nuclear disarmament, the core of the NPT, has been on the back burner for far too long. As the Commission says, "States must recommit to the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons". The Commission notes that, naturally, the IAEA is not the lead agency for nuclear disarmament, but it rightly points out that "progress towards disarmament, or the lack of it, deeply affects the IAEA's non-proliferation mission".

The sums of money proposed by the Commission of Eminent Persons for measures to enhance the Agency's effectiveness are very modest. But this is not just about money. The Agency does not work in a vacuum. Political commitment to the goals of the Agency needs to be renewed at the highest level to encourage the transfer of nuclear technology to the developing world, to enhance safety and security, to strengthen non-proliferation and, naturally, to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament.

Furthermore, the problems facing the world in the nuclear arena are plain for all of us to see. The Agency can do much to address them if given the authority, technology and resources. Much more than the future of the Agency is at stake. We are talking about international development and security, and ultimately about the sort of world we want to leave to our children.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.6.

Mr. Benmihidi (Algeria): Allow me at the outset to welcome Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to extend to him, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, our sincere thanks for the introduction of the annual report of the work of the Agency for 2007 and for the valuable information he provided on the activities of the Agency during the period covered.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work of Mr. ElBaradei at the head of the Agency and to pay tribute to the tireless efforts he has deployed during his mandate and to the actions he has conducted, in particular, those aiming at achieving the goals and aspirations of all Member States in promoting the principle of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The Algerian delegation is deeply honoured to hold the chairmanship of the Agency's Board of Governors for this year. In that capacity, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.6. I would thank all sponsors listed in that document and in the addendum, which will be issued later. I would also like to say that the list of sponsors is still open.

The draft resolution submitted for the Assembly's consideration reflects a broad consensus among the member States of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), reached during earlier consultations in Vienna. It is a simple, concise and factual text based on resolution 62/2, which the Assembly adopted by consensus at its sixty-second session. The proposed resolution takes note of the annual report of the IAEA and the resolutions adopted by the Agency's General Conference, held in Vienna from 29 September to 4 October 2008. It reaffirms the Assembly's strong support for the indispensable role of the Agency in encouraging the development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful uses and in technology transfer to developing countries, as well as in nuclear safety, verification and security. It also appeals to

Member States to continue to support the work of the Agency.

It is my hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution without a vote, as it did in its previous session.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and Croatia and Albania. The European Union would like to congratulate the Secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, its Director General, for the Agency's excellent work in the course of the past year. We would also like to thank the Director General for his report on the activities of the IAEA in 2008.

The European Union member States are pleased with the outcome of the 52nd General Conference of the IAEA, held in Vienna from 29 September to 4 October 2008, particularly with the resolutions and decisions that were adopted there.

As in the past, the European Union has co-sponsored the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA (A/63/L.6) and we support its content. The draft resolution, co-sponsored by more 41 countries, reflects a broad agreement among the member States of the IAEA. We sincerely praise the efforts made by the Chair of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, and we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as was the case last year.

The three pillars of the IAEA Statute — verification, safety and nuclear applications — are more topical than ever, with nuclear proliferation building up throughout the world. As a result, the European Union attaches great importance to the content of those pillars, because they contribute significantly to promoting peace and security in the world.

The European Union reaffirms its full support for the work carried out by the Agency in serving the objectives of peaceful nuclear cooperation and nuclear safety. The IAEA remains the best qualified forum to ensure responsible use of the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We also acknowledge that it plays a crucial role in the field of nuclear verification at the global level. That role is all the more vital, as the world is currently facing very disturbing proliferation crises.

With respect to nuclear safety, we would like to mention once again the Agency's Nuclear Security Fund, which the European Union consistently supports. We invite all States to commit to contribute to that Fund without delay.

The general safeguards agreements and additional protocols of the Agency constitute the standard in the area of verification. The European Union believes that they are prerequisites to an effective and credible safeguards system. All member States of the IAEA must honour all their obligations with respect to those safeguards agreements.

The European Union is also working to make the additional protocol a condition for the export of nuclear materials. Additional protocols have been in force since May 2004 in all member States of the European Union. We urge all States that have not yet done so to ratify that protocol without delay. Adhering to that instrument is, indeed, one of the crucial ways to verify that States parties have respected their obligations under article III, of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Equally, we call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and implement without delay their respective safeguards agreements and additional protocols, because those two instruments strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. They contribute to the safety of all States and increase the confidence necessary for international cooperation with a view to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In that regard, the European Union is pleased that implementation of the additional protocol and transparency measures that go beyond that instrument has allowed the IAEA to conclude that there are no longer any pending issues concerning verification in Libya and that inspections there can continue routinely.

Through our joint action within the framework of the European Union's collective security and foreign policy, we support the Agency's nuclear verification and safety activities. We also support the strengthening of legislative competence and national regulations for the implementation of international instruments on nuclear safety and on verification of nuclear materials and other radioactive matter.

Strengthening the ability of States to detect and fight the illicit trade in nuclear materials and other radioactive matter is another significant area of cooperation between the European Union and the Agency. The safety and security of radioactive sources

and the role of the Code of Conduct adopted by the General Conference of the Agency in 2003 are of particular importance to us all. That is why the European Union has made a commitment to respect the Code, in accordance with the European directive on the control of high-activity sealed radioactive sources and orphan sources. The European Union urges all countries to declare their willingness to respect the Code and to implement the instructions for the import and export of radioactive sources.

The Agency continues to play a fundamental role in the global fight against nuclear terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons. It is important for the members of the Agency to recognize the true value of its impartial expertise.

The European Union regrets that more than 100 States have yet to sign additional protocols and to implement them. We urge those States to do so without delay.

The Agency must continue to contribute resolutely to reducing all risks linked to nuclear activity, both from the point of view of safety and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. In that regard, the European Union believes that it is time to develop practical measures with respect to multilateral approaches to the fuel cycle. Balanced multilateral mechanisms would significantly contribute to meeting the concerns of beneficiary countries concerning the safety of supply by facilitating access to nuclear fuel and associated services, by reducing the need to invest in complex and expensive cycle technologies and by reducing concerns with respect to nuclear proliferation and safety.

Additionally, the EU is currently carefully considering the possibility of making a financial contribution to the ambitious nuclear fuel bank project under the auspices of IAEA. The EU would like to take this opportunity to thank the Agency for its efforts in creating a more peaceful and safer world and would like to reaffirm its full support. It is our great pleasure to once again this year sponsor the draft resolution on the Agency's report.

Mr. De Macedo Soares (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) member and associated States: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

MERCOSUR member and associated States would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, for his presence and his presentation of the main aspects of the Agency's activities. We would like to thank the Algerian delegation for its presentation of the draft resolution (A/63/L.6) on the Agency's report. We would also like to express our satisfaction with the successful conclusion of the Presidency of the Board of Governors by Chile, one of the MERCOSUR member and associated States.

The IAEA constitutes a fundamental multilateral forum dedicated to the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Our countries highly appreciate the Agency and the efforts undertaken to define its future activities. In this connection, MERCOSUR member and associated States would like to thank the Director General for the creation of the Commission of Eminent Persons, charged with the task of analysing the evolution of the needs and circumstances that will affect the work and functions of the Agency until 2020 and beyond.

The Commission constitutes a valuable initiative that can contribute to a better understanding of the future challenges of the Agency and the issues that will need to be discussed by member States, which continue to be the ones responsible for determining the priorities of the Agency's future activities.

The report tackles issues of different nature and complexity, and its suggestions will undoubtedly be of great use in the analysis and discussions among member States about the role of the Agency until 2020. We take note of the increasing importance attributed by the Agency's report to its safeguards activities. We consider that such activities constitute one of the statutory pillars and should not serve to weaken the promotional functions of the Agency.

MERCOSUR member and associated States are concerned about compliance by all States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) with their obligations in the fields of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this context, we underline the inalienable right of States to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with article IV of the NPT.

Allow me to stress that any intent to redefine the delicate balance of rights and obligations contained in the Treaty, and, in so doing, to question the legitimacy of member States' aspirations to technological development for exclusively peaceful purposes may contribute to a weakening of the system that the Treaty has created and that enjoys general acceptance.

MERCOSUR member and associated States express full support for the authority of the Agency as the competent body to verify compliance on the part of member States with their obligations under safeguards agreements.

In connection with the so-called assurances of supply of nuclear fuel and the Agency's potential role in that regard, we believe the issue still requires a deep analysis by all member States. It is imperative that this concept not weaken the rights enshrined in the NPT nor disturb the delicate balance of the Treaty.

We recognize the importance of technical cooperation and assistance in the multilateral field through active participation in the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme and the Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean, under the presidency of Argentina since last September.

We also recognize with satisfaction the efforts of the Agency and member States aimed at strengthening international cooperation in the field of nuclear and radiological security, transport and management of waste. In particular, we would like to highlight the progress achieved in the various activities aimed at maintaining and increasing security, such as the information and telecommunication networks for nuclear radiological safety and the national and regulatory infrastructure in charge of radioactive sources.

We also underline the efficacy of the IAEA verification system as an instrument to assure the international community of the peaceful purposes of nuclear programmes. Without prejudice, we consider that efforts to improve the efficiency of safeguards should continue, with the help of member States.

Allow me to make special mention of the common system of accounting and control applied by the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, as well as the valuable cooperation between this Agency and the IAEA. At the bilateral level, we welcome the letter, dated 3 March 2008, sent by Argentina and Brazil to the IAEA on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Given the medium-term projections of a substantial increase in the use of nuclear electric energy and cognizant of the fact that access to viable sources of sufficient energy is fundamental to development, we support the efforts undertaken by the IAEA to strengthen activities related to nuclear science and technology and their growing contribution to the resolution of key issues for member States in vital areas such as agriculture, food, human health, energy production, management of water resources and environmental protection.

Similarly, we note the work of the Agency with regard to the renewed interest in nuclear electric energy, and we support efforts to ensure that all developments in that field are accessible to all those interested in nuclear energy.

We believe the long-term management and disposal of spent fuel and waste continues to be a challenge in light of the growing use of nuclear electric energy and the increase in the spent fuel inventory. We recognize the efforts of the secretariat on the options for the final geological disposal of high-level waste, long-lived waste and spent fuel.

To conclude, allow me to express our support for IAEA efforts to combat nuclear and radiological terrorism and for the activities of the Agency aimed at the universal application of international legal instruments on the physical protection of materials in nuclear installations and radioactive sources.

Ms. Chabau (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba considers that the technical cooperation activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) play an essential role, since they enable the application of nuclear technologies and sciences to benefit social and economic development.

The Agency's technical cooperation pillar must be strengthened and given the necessary resources, unconditionally and in accordance with its priority. The Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy, for instance, is evidence of the benefits of nuclear technology in important areas for people. Such programmes must be given the necessary resources for their effective implementation.

Nuclear technologies are applied in Cuba in vital areas, namely public health care, agriculture, food, hydrology and environmental protection. That explains our strong commitment to the promotion of IAEA technical cooperation activities.

Last year, Cuba met its financial obligations with respect to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund on time and in full. Over 90 per cent of our national projects were implemented, and our country provided 30 international experts and 11 professors.

The priority Cuba accords to cooperation among developing countries is evidenced by our participation in Coordinated Research Programmes and the Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America.

Cuba's commitment and capacity to participate in actions under the important IAEA technical cooperation pillar are adversely affected as a consequence of the illegal and criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade that the United States Government has imposed on Cuba for nearly five decades. According to conservative calculations, as of December 2007 the blockade has resulted in losses of over $93 billion for Cuba.

As a result of this criminal policy, it continues to be difficult for our country to acquire the very important equipment and reagents needed for technical cooperation projects. Likewise, the visas for Cuban specialists are denied to prevent them from participating in the IAEA technical meetings that take place in the United States.

All the fields in which the IAEA acts under its mandate are important and an adequate balance among them must be kept. Cuba rejects any attempt to favour the rest of the Agency's pillars to the detriment of the technical cooperation, which needs stable and predictable resources.

Cuba will actively participate in the consideration of the report on the role of the IAEA up to 2020 and beyond. We are convinced that the elaboration of the Agency's vision for the future has to be the outcome of a comprehensive and deep analysis process, which includes the active participation of all member States.

Our country rejects any attempt to use nuclear fuel supply as a means of political or economic coercion or as a mechanism to establish the monopoly of a few countries over the distribution of such fuel. Likewise, we oppose any attempt to impose safeguards obligations on some States that go beyond their legal commitments.

Cuba attaches great importance to radiation safety. We continue, in our country, to develop the required infrastructure and to train the necessary staff in this field. Our country is proud of its results concerning non-proliferation, reflected in the report submitted to the IAEA Board of Governors in March. It is important to highlight that — merely 4 years after Cuba signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, full-scope safeguards agreements and an additional protocol — we find ourselves in a small group of 47 countries in which the IAEA secretariat did not find any diversion of declared nuclear material nor any indication of non-declared nuclear material or activities.

We reaffirm that the Agency's verification activities must be carried out in an impartial and unbiased manner. All attempts to put pressure on or improperly interfere with verification activities, which jeopardize the efficiency and credibility of such activities, must be rejected. Verification must preserve its essentially technical character.

Cuba reaffirms its conviction that only unconditional dialogue based on equality and mutual respect will lead to the solution of the so-called Iran nuclear case. The inalienable right of States, including Iran, to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in accordance with their respective legal obligations, must be strictly respected. The IAEA is the only relevant authority that can verify the fulfilment of the obligations undertaken under the safeguard agreements of member States.

Notwithstanding the proclaimed end of the cold war, there are some 25,000 nuclear weapons in the world, 10,200 of which are ready for immediate use. Nuclear weapons upgrading programmes have not been halted. Instead of supporting nuclear disarmament, which is and must continue to be the highest priority in the field of disarmament, we see the promotion of stockpiling arms and wasting money on new weapons and weapons systems. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and doctrines based on their possession and use, poses a serious danger to international peace and security.

Cuba rejects the selective implementation of the NPT. Issues related to nuclear disarmament and the

peaceful use of nuclear energy must not continue to be disregarded while horizontal non-proliferation flourishes. I would like to close by reiterating Cuba's full support for the important work of the IAEA in the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy in a secure way.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his valuable efforts and for the insightful report to the General Assembly on the main activities of the Agency during the year 2007.

As he rightly mentioned, access to reliable and adequate sources of energy is essential for development. The demand for energy around the world has been growing significantly in the past decade and will continue to do so in the future. As a renewable source of energy, nuclear energy provides an attractive and appropriate option for many countries. Nuclear power would not only help to meet the increased demand for energy, but would also serve as a climatically benign source of energy. That has led a substantial number of countries, in particular developing countries, to embark upon planning for the construction of nuclear power reactors as well as significant expansions in their existing programmes.

As Mr. ElBaradei also mentioned, a nuclear renaissance is on the horizon. In this context and given the mandate and scientific capabilities of the IAEA, the Agency has a special mandate in relation to the management and strengthening of civilian use of nuclear power. Efforts to strengthen those technical cooperation activities of the Agency aimed at improving the capabilities of developing countries in nuclear energy production as a component of their energy mix should be pursued as a matter of priority.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has reaffirmed the important objective of the Agency and recognized the inalienable right of all NPT States parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Under article IV of the NPT, States parties have undertaken to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In fact, the inalienable right of all NPT States parties to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, without discrimination, constitutes one of the three major pillars upon which the NPT is founded. Notwithstanding such requirements, cooperation by developed countries, the main suppliers of nuclear high technology, with developing nations has remained at an unsatisfactory level.

In fact, nuclear cooperation between suppliers and recipients has been beset by restrictions, obstacles and disruption. Instead of promoting cooperation, a nuclear haves club, replete with discrimination and lack of transparency, has been created, inter alia, to hamper the access of NPT-party developing countries to nuclear power technology under the pretext of non-proliferation concerns. To remedy this shortcoming, the IAEA could and should play a decisive role by vigorously pursuing a balanced and non-discriminatory application of the provisions of the NPT and the IAEA safeguards. Attempts to politicize the work of the IAEA, including its technical cooperation programme, are in violation of the IAEA Statute and will only impede the ability of the Agency to carry out its responsibilities in an orderly fashion.

The application of safeguards is among the main functions of the Agency. While great efforts have been made by the Agency to apply and promote the universality of the safeguards to all relevant nuclear activities, it is distressing that some members of the Agency have yet to conclude their Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements. We call on all such members to fulfil their obligations at the earliest possible opportunity.

Furthermore, there is a dangerous trend at work that seeks to move away from preserving the NPT and ensuring its universality. Under that trend, those who have chosen not to accede to the NPT are not only subject to no pressure to do so, but are also encouraged and rewarded in various ways including through nuclear cooperation. As an example, the Zionist regime has been allowed to acquire a sizeable stockpile of nuclear weapons in the volatile Middle East region and to defy the will of all regional States and the international community to turn the Middle East into a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

I note the concerns raised today by Mr. ElBaradei on the security aspects of the issue and the possible diversion of peaceful nuclear activities into weaponization programmes. In this regard, I would like to emphasize the major concern there is about the nuclear activities of countries that are not party to the NPT and have nuclear weapons programmes. However,

we should be cautious against creating the impression that membership in the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State may be an impediment to the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

I would like to make some points regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's peaceful nuclear program. Iran, as a party to the NPT, considers the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to be its inalienable right and has thus invested extensive human and material resources in the field of nuclear power. This policy is based on long-term planning aimed at meeting the growing energy needs of the country. As we have stressed time and again, Iran's nuclear programme has been, is and will remain completely peaceful. All reports issued by the IAEA since November 2003 bear witness to the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme and the Agency has repeatedly reaffirmed that it has not seen indications of diversion of nuclear material to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. As a result of Iran's proactive cooperation and full transparency in the implementation of the work plan agreed between Iran and the IAEA in the summer of 2007, all outstanding safeguard implementation issues have been resolved and closed, as indicated by Mr. ElBaradei today. Naturally, according to the modality agreed in the work plan recorded in IAEA document INFCIRC/711, the implementation of safeguards in Iran must become normalized. In that regard, the IAEA secretariat's observance of the mutual understanding as reflected in the agreed work plan is key.

What have been characterized as alleged studies are nothing but fabricated documents given to the Agency by a certain country. They have nothing to do with the verification issues emanating from the implementation of the safeguards agreement regarding nuclear activities. In the meantime, Iran has been denied originals or even copies of documents relating to those allegations. As a gesture of good faith, to the extent possible, we have already provided the IAEA with our assessments of alleged studies.

Without a doubt, rather than stemming from so-called proliferation concerns, the move to bring the Iranian nuclear file to the Security Council and the intention of the sponsors of resolutions adopted thus far have emanated from their ulterior motives and narrow national considerations in order to deprive the Iranian people of their inalienable rights. In that regard, the demand for the suspension of enrichment is illegal, ultra vires and in contravention of the provisions of the NPT. The Iranian nation will never accept illegal demands.

The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his address to the General Assembly on 23 September 2008, reiterated that the Iranian nation is for dialogue. By presenting various offers, including its proposed package for constructive negotiations to the 5+1 Group in May 2008, Iran has already demonstrated its firm determination to hold negotiations without preconditions to find solutions to issues arising from the unjust and prejudicial approach of certain Powers. The 5+1 Group has yet to provide its response to Iran's proposed package. The policy of a few Powers to insist on suspension as a precondition for negotiations bears zero relation to reality and is an irrational and failed policy. Instead of applying economic leverage and political pressure, a solution that is based on reality, common concerns and obligations should be pursued as a viable alternative.

Finally, the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran are determined to exercise their inalienable right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and to build on their own scientific advances in developing various peaceful aspects of that technology, including the fuel cycle. Iran's commitment to its obligations under the NPT is steadfast. We ask nothing more than to exercise our inalienable rights.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and all the staff of the Agency's secretariat for the excellent work they have done in the past year. The latest annual report (see A/63/276) is a testament to the excellent quality and scope of their work. We express our full support for the Agency. We are pleased to once again be a sponsor of the draft resolution (A/63/L.6) on the IAEA's annual report. We hope that the draft resolution will, as usual, be adopted by consensus.

The IAEA is currently at a crossroads, to employ the word used by Mr. ElBaradei at the opening of the Agency's fifty-second General Conference in September of this year. That word is fully justified given two important developments that have emerged since the last session of the General Assembly, which we wish to refer to by way of illustration.

First, the report of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the future of the agency, headed by former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, which is known as the 20/20 report, stressed the fact that progress in the area of nuclear disarmament is essential to advancing the guarantee agenda.

Secondly, the decision by the Nuclear Suppliers Group to waive the application of generalized guarantees as a condition for nuclear cooperation with India undoubtedly creates new challenges with regard to the application of the IAEA system of generalized guarantees, including the Additional Protocol. It is necessary to acknowledge that the non-proliferation regime as we know it has reached a turning point and that we must, without further delay, initiate a process of reflection in order to establish the appropriate basis to achieve the goal of a universal non-proliferation regime.

My delegation believes that those two aspects are closely linked. We must be careful to ensure that certain recent developments do not further complicate the increasing challenge faced by the IAEA because of the balance that it must preserve between its activities in the area of cooperation on civil nuclear technology, on the one hand, and its activities to control the peaceful use of nuclear technology, on the other. Switzerland, which is currently a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, will continue to strongly support the Agency as its carries out its mission.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus, which was present at the founding of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), very actively supports the Agency's activities. We are satisfied that the Agency has become a highly regarded and cautious organization that strives to ensure that nuclear energy is used in the safest possible manner and for exclusively peaceful purposes. The Agency also works actively to resolve a set of pressing international problems. Its activities are characterized by a high degree of professionalism.

Belarus reiterates its consistent position with regard to the need to strengthen the Agency's status. We believe that global trends in the areas of energy and economic development require a further strengthening of the role of the IAEA. In order to ensure its sustainable economic development, Belarus took the decision to build its first nuclear power plant. That was preceded by a long, in-depth and comprehensive analysis. The need to ensure energy security, reduce carbon emissions and increase trust in safety indicators regarding the operation of nuclear power plants, as well as the economic advantages and competitiveness of nuclear energy, were all factors that had an impact on our decision to develop a peaceful national nuclear programme.

Work is currently under way in Belarus to establish and improve the necessary capacity and infrastructure to implement a large-scale nuclear energy project. We are drafting and adopting nuclear-energy-related legislation and improving the structures that regulate nuclear and radiological safety. Work is also under way to select a site for the construction of the nuclear power plant.

Belarus is keen to establish the closest possible cooperation with the IAEA in implementing our national nuclear programme. We believe that the active technical and expert cooperation provided by the Agency to States implementing nuclear programmes is of critical importance to establishing the basic foundations for the safe utilization of nuclear energy throughout the world. Belarus gives priority attention to nuclear safety issues. We are especially interested in international cooperation in the area of the safe and reliable operation of nuclear facilities, including the management of radioactive sources and spent nuclear fuel.

More than anyone else, we in Belarus are aware of the possible consequences of the lack of appropriate safety mechanisms in the operation of nuclear power plants. Belarus has suffered more than any other country in the world as a result of the worst man-made disaster of the twentieth century, which occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Belarus intends to continue to cooperate closely with the IAEA on issues pertaining to the rehabilitation of areas that were contaminated in the Chernobyl disaster. We expect the Agency to participate actively in the implementation of the United Nations Action Plan on Chernobyl to 2016 and in the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions.

Belarus does not intend to limit itself to the development of nuclear energy. We have decided that independence from any single source in the operation of any system — from financial systems to energy systems — makes it possible to avoid crises, including global ones. We are resolute supporters of diversifying

energy sources and supplies, including by mainstreaming alternative technologies and renewable sources of energy. That is one of the foundations of the policy of responsible international cooperation in the area of energy championed by Belarus.

There is a need to ensure fair access by all States to energy conservation technologies that are clean and economically rational and that exploit new sources of energy through a global United Nations mechanism to regulate the process. In that regard, during the course of this session of the General Assembly, we intend to hold a thematic debate on ensuring access by all States to energy conservation technologies and the use of alternative and renewable sources of energy while, of course, taking into account the issue of intellectual property rights.

It is clear that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to the energy crisis. That is why we welcome the decision of Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the IAEA, to establish an international energy organization. We share the view regarding the need for coordinated efforts in the area of energy and related fields, such as socio-economic development, climate change and poverty reduction.

One of the core functions of the IAEA's activities is to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime established. Belarus believes that, while taking into account the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Statute of the IAEA, existing international mechanisms must work together to ensure equal and non-discriminatory access by all interested States to the benefits of nuclear energy. We cannot agree to a practice whereby the readiness to cooperate in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is used by developed States as a way to exert political pressure on developing States. We believe that such a peaceful nuclear bludgeon should not be used in cases where Governments comply with their commitments in the area of non-proliferation.

In current circumstances, given the new threats and challenges facing the international community, the role of the NPT and that of the IAEA as the sole international organization established to ensure the necessary balance between the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and compliance with the regime established by the Treaty is increasingly important. Belarus attaches great importance to the Agency's work to improve and strengthen the effectiveness of its efforts in the area of safeguards.

By signing an additional protocol to its safeguards agreement in 2005, my country once again reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the strengthening of the Agency's authority in that area. We also recognize the role of the international export control regime. We in Belarus have established an effective national system for exports control. As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Belarus strictly abides by the Group's Guidelines on the supply and control of products.

We believe that the international community's non-proliferation efforts must be complemented by concrete steps in the area of nuclear disarmament and by the establishment and development of confidence-building measures between nuclear and non-nuclear States. At the same time, we base our policies on the usefulness of a comprehensive and realistic approach to processes related to non-proliferation and disarmament. In that regard, we should bear in mind that one of the most important goals of those processes is to establish a sound basis for enabling States to exercise their right to peaceful nuclear activities in accordance with the provisions of the NPT and the Statute of the IAEA.

In conclusion, we wish the Agency and its Director General every success in their multifaceted efforts in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Gumbi (South Africa): South Africa would also like to congratulate the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Agency's annual report (see A/63/276) for 2007. The report shows that the Agency's activities are still relevant and vital to enhancing the use of nuclear energy for economic and social development and in preventing its diversion to non-peaceful uses. The report also instils confidence in the Agency's determination to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to health and prosperity throughout the world in a professional, efficient and responsible manner.

My delegation would also like to thank the representative of Algeria, in its capacity as Chairperson of the IAEA Board of Governors, for introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/63/L.6 for the Assembly's usual consensus adoption.

South Africa concurs with the observation of the Agency regarding the central role of nuclear power at a time of a growing shortfall in energy and rising fossil fuel prices. It is encouraging that, in making that observation, the Agency has been equally mindful of the need to continue to seek innovative technologies aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of nuclear power through the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO). South Africa has gained much from its active participation in INPRO, which has proven to be a useful forum for studying innovative nuclear energy systems and associated requirements. South Africa welcomes the publication by the Agency of recommendations on INPRO methodology for the evaluation of different innovative nuclear energy systems. South Africa is certain that more benefits will accrue from INPRO's second phase, which will focus on innovative approaches to infrastructure and institutional development for countries beginning nuclear power programmes and on the establishment of collaborative projects between its members. My delegation also commends the activities of the Generation IV International Forum and the role played by that initiative in research activities on six next-generation nuclear energy systems.

South Africa believes that the Agency's role in creating an enabling environment for applications of nuclear technology — including as regards plant breeding for greater food security, the sterile insect technique to control insect pests, the effective management of water and life-saving medical procedures — constitutes a creative contribution to the improvement of living standards and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

With regard to the food and agriculture sector, my delegation would like to encourage the Agency to continue to assist Member States with tools for rapid diagnosis and protocols for animal disease early warning systems, as well as the provision of training to increase the use of nuclear and nuclear-related molecular diagnostic technologies. South Africa has noted with appreciation that the Agency's technical cooperation and coordinated research projects in the area of agriculture and food production supported more than 60 Member States in 2007.

My delegation likewise looks forward to greater cooperation between the Agency and South Africa's citrus industry in the fight against the false codling moth by integrating the use of the sterile insect technique with other control tactics. My delegation also welcomes the progress made by the Agency in examining the feasibility of using the sterile insect technique against the malaria-transmitting mosquito.

Like many other developing countries, South Africa is very much aware of the instrumental role of water security in advancing socio-economic development. It is for that reason that my delegation fully supports the Agency's activities in the management of water resources, including its efforts to bring isotope hydrology into the mainstream of national and international water-resources-related programmes.

South Africa believes that human health is yet another important area where the applications of nuclear technology play an important role. In that connection, my delegation welcomes the strengthening of collaboration between the Agency, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other partners in the area of nutrition and cancer. South Africa strongly supports the Agency's programme of action on cancer therapy, as more than 40 per cent of all cancers can be prevented and more than 30 per cent can be cured if detected early and treated.

Although the Agency's annual report for 2007 states that the nuclear industry has continued to demonstrate a high level of safety and security around the world, South Africa believes that nuclear safety and security is an important area that deserves continuous serious attention. It is a cause of concern that in the period under review there was slow progress in the number of accessions to and ratifications of the various safety conventions, which are important in improving safety performance and raising public confidence.

Despite those shortcomings, my delegation welcomes the Agency's publication of new safety requirements and guides, as well as the use of safety services to support the wider application of those standards. My delegation also commends the Agency for its activities in the areas of the control of radioactive sources, the management of radioactive waste and decommissioning, radiation protection for patients, incident and emergency preparedness and response, and civil liability for nuclear damage. With regard to nuclear security, my delegation encourages the Agency to continue its good work to enhance the security of nuclear and other radioactive material.

South Africa agrees that the threat of nuclear terrorism is one of the major challenges facing the world today. The issue of protecting against nuclear terrorism is important to South Africa, especially as we may draw from the Agency's expertise and require equipment in the overall security measures to be put in place for the soccer world championship to be held in South Africa in 2010.

My Government shares the Agency's view that safeguards and verification are instrumental in facilitating the peaceful use of nuclear applications for development. However, additional work still needs to be done. The Agency needs to be continuously equipped with the appropriate tools to instil international confidence in the fact that declared nuclear material around the world is fully accounted for and that the IAEA is able to verify that nuclear capabilities are being used for peaceful purposes only, as well as to provide assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities.

South Africa believes that it is incumbent upon all States to build confidence and provide assurances that nuclear capabilities are being used for peaceful purposes only. In that connection, my delegation urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran to heed the calls regarding the actions they must undertake with regard to the implementation of their NPT safeguards agreements with the Agency. South Africa also calls on member States to increase their cooperation with the Agency in dealing with the illicit network of nuclear proliferation activities.

South Africa recognizes the indispensable role that the additional protocol can play as a further measure to provide the necessary confidence and the desired assurances that member States apply their nuclear technology solely for peaceful purposes and that no declared or undeclared material is diverted to weapons programmes. Inasmuch as the additional protocol is voluntary, South Africa believes that it is an important confidence- and security-building measure that continues to play an essential role in creating a conducive environment for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. But it should not be used as a condition of supply for nuclear material.

It would be remiss of my delegation to conclude its statement without reference to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund. South Africa believes that the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund deserves urgent and decisive action. The Fund is a statutory and political commitment that needs to be realized. The Agency's technical cooperation projects constitute important building blocks to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to implement the projects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, especially in the areas of water security and combating disease, hunger and poverty.

Over the years, developing countries have repeatedly stressed the need for the funding of the Agency's cooperation projects to be sufficient, predictable and assured. They have also stressed the need to increase the technical cooperation budget, as it is clearly insufficient. South Africa believes that the time has arrived to conclusively correct the mistake of the past 50 years by incorporating the funding of technical cooperation projects into the regular budget.

As we have done in the past, I would like to conclude my statement by reiterating South Africa's strongly held view that continuous and irreversible progress in nuclear disarmament and other related nuclear arms control measures remains fundamental to the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation. The systematic and progressive elimination of all nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again remain the only guarantee against their use. That should remain our goal. Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and are mutually reinforcing. The verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons would prevent their use, irrespective of whose hands they were in. That would effectively curb their proliferation, because you cannot proliferate what you do not have.

Mr. Orkeldeen (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his introduction of the Agency's annual report (see A/63/276) for the consideration of the General Assembly. I should also like to thank him for the information it contains about the Agency's plans and programmes of action in the area of technical cooperation to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and maintain the international nuclear safety and security facilities. All of that attests to the growing role of the Agency as regards the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and development.

The Sudan attaches special importance to technological nuclear applications in the area of food security and the use of state-of-the-art technologies to control insects and manage hydrological resources, both of which are necessary components in the development of irrigation and large-scale agricultural projects. We therefore hope that we will continue to enjoy cooperation with UNICEF in the fields of education and agriculture and with the World Health Organization in those areas. The Agency's assistance to States in carrying out their development projects serves to complement those efforts. We hope that the Agency will continue to expand its sanitation projects on the regional and continental levels to combat insects that carry infectious diseases such as malaria, so that the continent can combat such deadly diseases and promote its social and economic development, as well as the MDGs.

The delegation of Sudan underscores the inalienable right of peoples and States to engage in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. We also underscore the principle that States must refrain from politicizing the vital role of the Agency lest they damage its credibility. On the basis of that principle, we would like to see those issues addressed in a fair, equitable manner through dialogue and negotiations in order to find appropriate solutions.

Sudan would like to underscore its support for peoples' aspirations to turn certain regions of the world into nuclear-weapon-free zones, which is one of the fundamental principles for the maintenance of international peace and security. Unfortunately, although for decades now it has striven to achieve that objective, the Middle East is far from that goal. Unfortunately, Israel, the only State that possesses nuclear weapons in the region, has, to date, refused to place its nuclear programme under IAEA safeguards and has disregarded all appeals by the international community to comply. A commitment by Israel to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Additional Protocol would strengthen the maintenance of peace in the region.

My country's delegation welcomes the Agency's efforts on the African continent. We welcome the increased budget for fighting disease and for medical support in that field. We call upon the Agency to devote additional resources to the fight against disease and poverty throughout the world and the African continent in particular.

Mr. Alazemi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is discussing today an important item on its agenda that is closely associated with the principles on which the United Nations was founded, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security.

Having reviewed the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the State of Kuwait expresses its most sincere appreciation to the Director General of the Agency, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and all his staff for the efforts they have made and for their tireless work to achieve the objectives and aspirations of the world's peoples and States by strengthening the principles of the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the good of humanity.

We also convey our thanks and gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Algeria for introducing to the General Assembly the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA for the year 2007 (A/63/L.6), for which my country will vote.

The State of Kuwait, since it joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on 15 August 1986, has concentrated on cooperation with the Department of Technical Cooperation of the IAEA and on the implementation of a set of projects dealing with building its own capacities and establishing special laboratories to measure the level of radioactive isotopes found in Kuwait's water and soil. On the basis of its belief in the vital importance of training qualified national professionals in the fields of protection from nuclear radiation and the safe handling of radioactive materials, my country took the initiative of hosting regional workshops in cooperation with the IAEA. Moreover, it continues to send trainees to attend training courses held at IAEA headquarters.

Through its Technical Cooperation Programme, the Agency plays a key role in the exchange and transfer of nuclear information and know-how to member States, in particular developing countries. The programme aims at facilitating the use of nuclear science and related technologies and at meeting, in a sustainable manner, the economical and social needs of member States through the safe use of nuclear power for food production, health care, water resource management and environmental protection.

In that context, we endorse what was contained in the annual report of the Agency for 2007 concerning enhancing the capabilities of the member States in applied nuclear technologies. Such technologies are aimed at removing obstacles to achieving sustainable food security through the use of technology to remedy soil deterioration, achieving a sustainable intensification of crop outputs and livestock production, combating pests by using sterile insect technology, improving the quality and safety of food and consolidating the efforts of the Agency to achieve sustainable food security. That is particularly important in the light of the international food crisis that most States are witnessing.

The vital and important role of the IAEA in preventing the use of nuclear power for military purposes and in promoting its exploitation for peaceful purposes in the safest possible ways can only be fulfilled through the concerted efforts of all States. The Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council has therefore recommended that its member countries conduct a study to create a joint programme on nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with international standards and regimes.

We would also like to note that it is unfortunate that, although the Agency has called on some States with advanced nuclear capabilities and activities to join the NPT and implement the IAEA comprehensive safeguards, those calls have gone unheeded, with negative effects for international peace and security.

In that context, the goal of achieving peace and stability in the Middle East region will never be accomplished as long as Israel remains the only country in the region that refuses to subject its facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime. That represents a key obstacle to achieving universality for the NPT and seriously impedes the strengthening of the NPT regime. If that irregular situation persists, it could encourage other States in the region to seek the possession of nuclear weapons or to manufacture them, citing the Agency's laxity in dealing with the countries that refuse to subject their installations to inspection.

In view of the intransigence of the Israeli position on that matter, we call upon the international community to pressure Israel to join the NPT and subject all of its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the IAEA. We affirm the right of all States in the region to obtain the technology, know-how and needed expertise to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes within the framework of the relevant international conventions, thus making the Middle East region, including the Gulf area, free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

As regards the development of the Iranian nuclear issue and proceeding from our conviction of the need to respect international legitimacy and the principle of pursuing a peaceful resolution to conflicts, the State of Kuwait calls upon the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its cooperation with the IAEA with transparency, in order to dispel the fears and doubts surrounding the nature of its nuclear programme, address all outstanding issues and give diplomatic efforts time to reach a peaceful solution through a demonstration of flexibility, wisdom and responsibility by all parties concerned.

In conclusion, I would like to express my country's hope that the international community will continue its support for the IAEA in its work to ensure the full, non-selective implementation of all international agreements related to disarmament, including the NPT, with its three main pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Mr. Wang Qun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for the report (see A/63/276) on the work of the Agency in 2007. We appreciate the enormous efforts and important role of the Agency in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Over the past year, the Agency has come a long way in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Agency has provided assistance to member States through its nuclear power, nuclear applications and technical cooperation programmes to address challenges they encounter in the areas of energy supply, food security and environmental protection. Positive progress has been made in those areas.

Meanwhile, the Agency has also played a pivotal role in safeguarding the peaceful uses of nuclear material and facilities and in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. China appreciates the positive role of the Agency in facilitating the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and the Iranian nuclear issue. Over the past year, the

Agency has applied safeguards in over 160 countries and worked actively to promote the signing of additional protocols and implement the integrated safeguards framework.

The international momentum to develop nuclear power is today very strong. How to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by member States while preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is an important issue that has a bearing on the future orientation of the Agency. China is of the view that the role and function of the Agency should be adequately enhanced.

First, it is essential that the expertise of the Agency should be further enhanced so that it can better assist member States in establishing their nuclear power and applications infrastructure and in accelerating the pace and broadening the scope of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Secondly, the Agency should work further to strengthen its nuclear safety regulatory system and continue to assist member States to establish sound and effective nuclear security systems.

Thirdly, the Agency should continue to address verification issues in an impartial and balanced manner and work to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards system, so as to further promote the universality and effectiveness of the Additional Protocol.

China has always actively supported and participated in the Agency's technical cooperation programmes. We enjoy close cooperation with the Agency and the relevant member States. I am happy to recall the very fruitful cooperation on nuclear security between China and the Agency during our preparations for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The Agency sent qualified experts to China to provide advice and training. It also provided China with much-needed nuclear detection equipment. In May of this year, in the wake of the devastating earthquake that struck Wenchuan in China's Sichuan province, through its technical cooperation programme the Agency provided radioactive material detection equipment and relevant training. That played an important role in post-quake search operations using radioactive sources. The Chinese Government wishes to express its sincere thanks to the Agency for all those efforts.

As always, China will support the Agency and will continue to work with other member States and the secretariat to ensure that there is further progress in the Agency's work.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I take great pleasure in welcoming Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and in thanking him for introducing the Agency's annual report.

For over 50 years, the Agency has been the global centre of cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Russia has consistently championed promoting the Agency's role and standing. We will continue to actively support the multifaceted activities of the IAEA. We appreciate the efforts of Mr. ElBaradei, to whom the Agency owes a great deal of its success.

We believe that further improving the IAEA's activities should be based on a balanced approach to the implementation of all its mandated functions. We believe that the main task for the near future is to establish the conditions under which all States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) can freely and fully make use of the benefits of nuclear energy in conformity with the requirements of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

An example of successful cooperation is the Agency's International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles, which has been implemented on Russia's initiative since 2000. We highly appreciate its results, the heightened international prestige it has acquired and the new positive trends in its implementation and development. We intend to continue to support that project, including through financial means.

The Russian Federation regards issues related to ensuring access to nuclear-fuel-cycle services and resolving the problem of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste management as key to the large-scale development of nuclear energy. It is very clear that the Agency has a central role in promoting multilateral approaches, and we will actively support the Agency in that regard. We are ready to work with all interested States to define and harmonize initiatives as regards multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, where that is feasible and possible. We have therefore consistently implemented the Russian initiative to

establish a global nuclear energy infrastructure, which will enable us to ensure equitable access to nuclear energy for all interested parties in strict compliance with the provisions of the regime established by the NPT.

To achieve the goals set out in that initiative, an international uranium enrichment centre was established jointly with the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2007 in the Russian Federation at the federal Angarsk Electrolytic Chemical Plant. We are grateful to the IAEA for its favourable assessment of Russia's initiative, in particular as regards the establishment of the international centre, which is open for participation by third-party States without any political conditions. At present, procedures are being finalized for the accession of Armenia and Ukraine. In January 2008, the IAEA was officially informed about the inclusion of the centre on the list of Russian nuclear fuel-cycle facilities that can be covered by IAEA safeguards.

Given the number of ideas that exist with regard to ensuring fuel supplies, it is clear that the time has come to consider harmonized approaches to establishing such guaranteed fuel supplies. The vision of what those principles should be was presented during the fifty-second session of the IAEA General Conference. We believe that it is necessary to build up the capabilities of the Agency as the only international body with the requisite authority to assess States' compliance with their obligations in the area of nuclear non-proliferation.

One of the Agency's effective instruments in that field is the additional protocol to the safeguards agreement. In the future, the additional protocol stands to become a universal norm for verifying compliance by NPT States parties with their obligations and an essential new standard in the field of nuclear export control. We intend to continue assisting the Agency in reinforcing the IAEA safeguards system, including through our national programme of scientific and technological support safeguards.

Russia ratified its Additional Protocol in October 2007. We hope that all the States that have not yet acceded to that important instrument — first and foremost, those engaged in significant nuclear activities or possessing significant stockpiles of nuclear materials — will do so as rapidly as possible.

Today, one of the most important factors in ensuring the national security of an individual State and the international community as a whole is the ability to respond in an adequate and timely manner to the threat of nuclear terrorism. In that respect, we note the valuable contribution of IAEA experts to the implementation of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. The Initiative significantly enhances and complements IAEA activities in the framework of the implementation of the Agency's Nuclear Security Plan for 2006-2009. We intend to further improve the parametres for our practical cooperation in that field, including in terms of resource support.

We back the IAEA's active cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other international organizations and structures on the issue of countering the threat of nuclear terrorism. The Russian Federation has ratified the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. We call upon States that have not yet done so to promptly sign and ratify both the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism as well as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its amendment.

One of the three pillars on which all IAEA activity is based is ensuring nuclear and radiation safety. We welcome the efforts of the Agency to assist States in establishing and strengthening national regulatory systems in that field. We intend to continue to lend effective support to IAEA efforts to strengthen international cooperation in the field of nuclear and radiation safety, the safe transport of nuclear and radioactive materials, and the management of radioactive waste.

We attach great importance to the implementation of technical cooperation projects related to the removal of highly enriched uranium from Soviet-designed research reactors. In 2007, the Russian Federation provided technical assistance in the removal of fuel from Viet Nam, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Russia intends to assist Ukraine in improving the safety of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant site and accelerating the start of the facility's decommissioning. We will allocate $17 million for that purpose to the Nuclear Safety Account and the Chernobyl Shelter Fund.

An important area of the Agency's activities is the implementation of the Technical Cooperation Programme. The Russian Federation has been and

intends to continue to pay its voluntary contributions to the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund in full. We are in favour of preserving the current mechanism for financing the Technical Cooperation Fund on the basis of contributions paid by member States in national currencies, the amount of which is assessed under the United Nations scale in accordance with existing practice.

The Russian Federation intends to assist the Republic of Armenia in improving the safety of the Armenian nuclear power plant. We plan to provide that assistance within the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme and to allocate $10 million to that end.

I reaffirm our support for the draft resolution on the IAEA report (A/63/L.6). As a sponsor of the draft, Russia attaches great importance to the work of the Agency and is confident that it will be continued in the future in the interests of strengthening international security.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to begin by welcoming the report (see A/63/276) introduced by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its contents, reviewing the wide range of important and diverse activities of the Agency in 2007.

I also wish to confirm our absolute confidence in the effective ability of the Agency to perform its task in promoting a balanced focus on the three main pillars of its activities: technology, safety and verification.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The year 2007 marked the completion of five decades since the establishment of the IAEA, during which it contributed, inter alia, to the implementation of comprehensive safeguards regimes, the enhancement of nuclear safety and security standards, and increased use of safe nuclear energy. Accordingly, in 2007, some 439 nuclear reactors provided 15 per cent of the world's electricity, while dozens of others were either under construction or in the planning phase.

Egypt has supported the IAEA since its establishment, convinced of its role in enhancing international peace and the peaceful use of nuclear technology in areas that serve the development aspirations of developing countries and address international needs in a large array of fields.

Since it was entrusted with the establishment and management of comprehensive safeguards for non-nuclear-weapon States, the importance of the Agency's role has grown even further. All States of the Middle East have thus realized the central importance of acceding to the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime, except for Israel, the only State that remains outside the regime, despite the adoption at the 2003 IAEA General Conference of a resolution entitled "Application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East", calling upon Israel to join the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime in order to facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to enhance regional stability and confidence-building.

There is no doubt that the presence of nuclear facilities not subject to the safeguards regime and not complying with international safety or security standards in the Middle East is a matter that calls for an effective regional and international response, especially since the absence of international oversight of such facilities threatens the security and stability of the entire region.

We appeal to countries that have not recognized the importance of Arab calls for the IAEA to seriously address Israel's nuclear capabilities to reassess their unconstructive approach in preventing the consideration of a draft resolution of such importance at the IAEA General Conference. That trend was confirmed again at the 2008 session and will further complicate the crisis and increase nuclear threats in the Middle East, and eventually weaken the role of the Agency itself.

It is important to prove by practical means the sincerity of the support, often reiterated in our statements to the General Assembly and its First Committee, for the central role played by the IAEA in the field of verification. Such practical means could include providing the Agency with the financial resources it needs and strengthening its legal authority through the universalization of the comprehensive safeguards regime, thus allowing it to demand additional commitments from States to strengthen its verification capabilities.

At a time when developing countries' need is growing for clean and inexpensive energy sources to address their development plans and promote their socio-economic situations, Egypt sees a crucial role for

the Agency in widening the horizons of sustainable development and in effectively facilitating the satisfaction by non-nuclear-weapon States signatories to the NPT of their growing nuclear energy needs. That should proceed in a context that secures them the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, as provided for in article IV of the NPT.

The importance of the IAEA's role has increased even further as the international community continues to witness qualitative and quantitative limitations on nuclear energy-related technology transfers from developed to less developed countries. It is indeed regrettable that efforts continue to impose unjustified restrictions on the acquisition by non-nuclear-weapon States of the necessary material and technology to develop their peaceful nuclear programmes, on the one hand, while on the other, current efforts are being made to facilitate the acquisition by non-NPT member States of nuclear technologies and materials exceeding those which have ever been granted to non-nuclear-weapon States. Egypt believes that such an approach significantly endangers the universality of the comprehensive safeguards regime and undermines efforts to avoid politicizing it in a manner that jeopardizes its validity and value and the feasibility of the NPT itself.

In that context and despite the fact that nuclear-weapon States have not fulfilled their nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT, the 1995 package of the Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, those States and others that enjoy nuclear protection under them are still working to impose additional commitments on non-nuclear-weapon States in the form of additional safeguards. They are doing so while ignoring the voluntary nature of any additional international commitment beyond the comprehensive safeguards regime, as well as the logical inevitability of achieving the universality of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards system prior to any attempt to change the system in a discriminatory manner.

Through 2007 and up until now, the Agency has continued to consider the technical, legal and operational dimensions of a number of current proposals on nuclear fuel assurances based on a multilateral approach to the nuclear fuel cycle. Egypt's position is in line with the statement made by the Director General of IAEA in his June 2007 report to the Board of Governors, to the effect that there is no basis for assuming that multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle should in any way restrict free national choices in that regard, in accordance with the inalienable right guaranteed by the NPT to non-nuclear-weapon States without restrictions to that right.

Egypt reiterates its interest in supporting the activities of the Agency in the area of technical cooperation with ourselves and other developing countries that benefit from technical cooperation programmes for the use of nuclear technologies in the sectors of health, agriculture, food, water resources, radioactive isotopes and irradiation. In that context, we reiterate our belief in the importance of enhancing the role of the Agency in the area of technology transfer by securing and increasing the financial resources allocated for technical cooperation activities, given that such activities represent a main pillar of the Agency's key area of activities under its statute.

Taking into consideration the role of the Agency as the international multilateral forum in applying the highest safety standards to nuclear energy reactors, Egypt, as a State seeking nuclear energy on its route to development, cooperates with the Agency in that regard. That cooperation includes assessing energy requirements and technical advice with regard to the safe and effective development of national capabilities in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We look forward to the continued support of the Agency for our efforts in that area.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express our particular appreciation to the staff of the Agency and Director General Mohamed ElBaradei for the outstanding and balanced role he has played in leading the Agency since he assumed his post in 1997. I also wish to express our gratitude for the results achieved under his responsible leadership in terms of developing that most sensitive and important international body. In that regard, I would like to reaffirm that Egypt will continue to support the Agency in all possible ways in order to preserve the value that the entire international community attaches to its balanced role and to the contribution that it makes to security, stability, scientific advancement and welfare.

Mr. Chow (Singapore): Singapore joins other members of the General Assembly in thanking the Director General and his dedicated staff for the comprehensive report (see A/63/276) and their

excellent work. That is testimony to the leadership and skills of the Director General. We would like to reaffirm our full support for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the global focal point for nuclear cooperation, in line with its three pillars of technology, safety and security and verification.

The year 2007 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the IAEA, which was a concrete expression of the international community's hopes for and aspirations to "atoms for peace". After five decades of important progress, the Agency's activities remain vital in advancing the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology for economic and social development. In that context, Singapore welcomes the Agency's initiative to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that it will face in the years to come. The recent work of the Commission of Eminent Persons on the future of the Agency constitutes a timely exercise to review how the three pillars of nuclear safety, nuclear technology and nuclear verification can be strengthened. To that end, Singapore extends its full support to the Agency and stands ready to work with all stakeholders.

At a time when nuclear energy is becoming increasingly attractive as an alternative source of energy for a growing number of countries, the IAEA's primary role of ensuring the peaceful, safe and secure use of nuclear energy has gained renewed importance. At the end of 2007, a total of 34 nuclear power plants were under construction around the world. I understand from the Director General's recent statement that that number has increased to 36. The increased interest in the use of nuclear power is notably centred in Asia, corresponding to the region's rapid economic growth and accompanying rise in energy demand.

Under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, States have the sovereign right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful means. At the same time, there is also a grave responsibility to carefully consider safety and security issues that arise from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Chernobyl tragedy is a solemn reminder of the profound and long-term detrimental consequences resulting from a serious nuclear power plant accident. The impact on the affected people and the surrounding economies continues to be felt today. We should heed that lesson because the world can ill afford a repeat of Chernobyl.

Unfortunately, despite advancements in science and technology and the introduction of earthquake-proof designs for today's nuclear power plants, accidents can still happen. The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant and the earthquake of 16 July 2007 provide a stark reminder of how accidents can occur. Fortunately, the nuclear power plant was designed to withstand shocks above its recommended seismic threshold. That helped to avert a potentially serious nuclear disaster. In that case, Japan's responsible approach to design safety was commendable.

However, we can never afford to be complacent, especially when more States are considering developing nuclear energy as an alternative source of energy. States undertaking such nuclear options should not neglect or compromise the safety of their people and the neighbouring region. Plant designs and site locations in particular should be carefully considered. For example, locating nuclear reactors within earthquake zones or active volcanic areas can be potentially deadly. The effects of a nuclear accident are transboundary and can affect the region at large. It is therefore imperative that regional safety concerns also be taken into serious consideration when new nuclear power plants are planned and built.

At the twelfth summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), held in Cebu, the Philippines, ASEAN leaders, acknowledging that the region needed to explore alternative sources of energy, tasked officials to look into a regional nuclear safety regime. The leaders again reaffirmed their decision to forge ASEAN-wide cooperation to establish a regional nuclear safety regime by signing the ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Sustainability at the thirteenth ASEAN summit.

We believe that the IAEA can play an instrumental role in helping our region to adopt a set of common norms and best practices that are in line with international standards for the design of nuclear power plants and nuclear technology management and development. Regional safety and security regimes under the IAEA auspices can be critical in helping States to develop capacity based on the IAEA's safety protocols and standards. Singapore will continue to work closely with the IAEA and regional partners to develop and promote a regional framework of collaboration and cooperation, as well as to adopt the best practices in that field. In that way, the region can take a constructive and responsible step forward in

fostering a culture of safety among nuclear regulators and operators.

Looking ahead, we believe that it is also timely to examine the future role of the IAEA. A number of important recommendations made by the Commission of Eminent Persons are worth considering. They include the further harmonization of regional nuclear standards, a move on the part of countries from voluntary to mandatory international peer reviews, and compulsory inspections to assess compliance with nuclear standards in order to help increase safety worldwide and enhance public confidence.

In conclusion, Singapore would like to express its continued support for the important work of the IAEA in the areas of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, safety and security, and verification. We strongly urge all States — especially those with outstanding obligations and issues — to cooperate fully with the IAEA to further strengthen cooperation and confidence-building as part of the international community's efforts to enhance global peace and security.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, I would like first to express our appreciation to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his presentation of the 2007 annual report of the IAEA (see A/63/276). His tenure has come at a time of complex global challenges. Our gratitude goes to him for his long years of excellent service and steadfast efforts, which have seen the Agency grapple with those challenges in an effective manner while preparing to meet future ones.

Among the greatest achievements of the IAEA are its contributions in advancing human progress in nuclear applications, promoting socio-economic development and maintaining world peace and security. We would therefore like to express our sincere appreciation for the role that the Agency has long played in promoting nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under the three pillars of its mandate.

Indonesia attaches great importance to technical cooperation with the Agency, which contributes significantly to development in Member States. But it is our obligation to ensure that the IAEA has sufficient, guaranteed and predictable resources for its activities. For its part, Indonesia has been supportive of technical cooperation activities and has consistently paid its annual share of the targets of the Technical Cooperation Fund. For the Fund's 2009 target, Indonesia has pledged the amount of $100,000.

In our view, the current funding system for the Fund, which relies on voluntary contributions, is neither fair nor capable of meeting the essential needs of Member States, especially developing countries. In order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its technical cooperation, the IAEA should pursue a more balanced distribution of its budget in order to reflect the equal importance of the Agency's three pillars, thereby maintaining a balance among its various statutory activities.

It remains imperative to strengthen the effectiveness of the Agency — including its performance in technical cooperation activities — so that it can face the challenges of changing circumstances and the diverse needs of Member States. In that regard, we value the Director General's initiative to establish the Commission of Eminent Persons to reflect upon the nature and scope of the Agency's programme until 2020 and beyond. We share the hope that the report will trigger discussions among Member States so that its recommendations will contribute to the achievement of development goals and will enhance the Agency's credibility and effectiveness.

Indonesia has long been a strong supporter of promoting nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and the IAEA has a large and active technical cooperation programme in my country. Indonesia greatly commends the Agency's work in areas of vital importance, such as food and agriculture, including its work to enhance the capacity of Member States to ensure sustainable food security and productivity through the application of nuclear techniques. The reinvigoration of agriculture and support for research on a variety of technologies, including better-adapted crop varieties and agriculture techniques, are key. It is within the Agency's mandate to contribute strongly to those global efforts to alleviate food shortages by helping to implement all technological and scientific resources available within its capacity.

Bearing in mind that the major health issues of our time, such as cancer, require concerted international cooperation, we also support the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy. The Programme has played a growing role in international

efforts against cancer in the developing world. Indonesia is interested in benefiting from the cooperation with the IAEA in that important Programme.

It is positive to note that the IAEA has increased international awareness about the future role of nuclear energy in tackling the grave challenge of climate change. We are pleased that the *Nuclear Technology Review 2008* highlighted the results of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bali, Indonesia, last December, which charted the way for what will, we hope, be an effective post-2012 Kyoto agreement on climate change. The *Review* rightly indicated that the Conference had marked a step forward in managing risks related to global climate change.

We commend the work of the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO). Indonesia, as a member of INPRO, continues to support its activities to meet global energy demands and to promote sustainable economic and social development.

As part of the efforts to strengthen the international nuclear safety regime, we have participated actively in the Asian Nuclear Safety Network (ANSN). It has played an important role in promoting nuclear safety networks and contributes to the nuclear safety activities of Asian countries. We encourage other countries in Asia to join ANSN, which is the sole network for promoting nuclear safety in the region. We encourage the Agency to continue its support for the regional nuclear safety activities carried out within the framework of ANSN.

Indonesia, as an archipelagic State, continues to support the efforts of the IAEA to strengthen cooperation and coordination, to address the potential for accidents or incidents during the transportation of spent fuel and high-level nuclear waste and radioactive materials by sea, and to thwart possible dangers to human health in and the environment of the transit countries. We share the view that the expansion of nuclear power will create opportunities as well as challenges and that we need to find a solution with regard to spent-fuel management and waste disposal in order to ensure the sustainable development of nuclear energy.

Nevertheless, it is important that the measures to strengthen nuclear security not hamper international cooperation in the field of peaceful nuclear activities, the exchange of nuclear material for peaceful purposes and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Indonesia continues to support the Agency's work to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards system. The safeguards system is both a fundamental part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential element in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. My delegation is pleased to state that as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Indonesia has put a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol into force, and has implemented integrated safeguards in collaboration with the Agency. However, we share the concern that progress on the universalization of safeguards agreements and additional protocols has been slower than expected. The universalization should be applied equally, to both non-nuclear and nuclear-weapon States.

Indonesia attaches great importance to the NPT and hopes that, in the future, the parties will be able to formulate a consensual text that could be recommended for adoption at the 2010 Review Conference. At the Conference, all countries should renew their commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and intensify their efforts to realize the three pillars of the NPT in a balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner. The Agency should prepare, and should be ready to respond to the technical needs of verification for future nuclear disarmament. Since nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing, the Agency should not cover only verification in the context of both fulfilment of non-proliferation commitments.

We are of the view that the creation of a multilateral fuel cycle arrangement that would, inter alia, guarantee the security of the nuclear fuel supply, would provide a complementary mechanism for strengthening the existing non-proliferation regime and should be discussed in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner. The objectives and modalities to establish such arrangements should not terminate or restrict the right of each State to develop nuclear technology.

For a long time now, the General Conference of the IAEA has devoted attention to the situation in the Middle East. Sadly, however, there has been no progress in the efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We are concerned by that situation, and we stress the demand that Israel place all its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards and accede to the NPT, as it has already been called upon to do by a number of resolutions of the General Assembly and the General Conference of the IAEA.

Indonesia appreciates the overall contribution of the IAEA, despite the difficulties, in making progress in the implementation of safeguards agreements in some countries.

To conclude, my delegation would like to stress that Indonesia is deeply committed to the cause of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and fully supports the work of the IAEA. Challenges that confront us should be met through concerted and concrete actions in which all Member States, working together, must bear their responsibility. Strengthening the Agency is a shared interest and a commitment for all States members of the Agency. We believe that further constructive debate among the member States is imperative to ensure that demands, concerns and priorities, particularly those of the developing countries, are duly addressed.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): The delegation of Pakistan would like to begin by expressing its appreciation for the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (see A/63/276) and the efforts made by the Agency and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, in that regard.

The IAEA's role as the world's focal point in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy assumes greater significance in view of the fast-growing global demand for energy and the shortage of fossil fuel reserves, as well as the diverse challenges of environmental impacts and proliferation. The IAEA can make a significant contribution in meeting the needs and challenges of the twenty-first century by ensuring equitable access to nuclear materials, technology and equipment for peaceful purposes.

In order to ensure the realization of every State's right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, there is a need to develop universal and non-discriminatory criteria for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear power generation. In this regard, principles should be placed above expediency and commercial interests. A non-discriminatory approach in the promotion of civilian nuclear cooperation would help reinforce confidence and credibility in the IAEA safeguards system and strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

In the context of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it would be pertinent to recall the words of United States President Eisenhower, who in his "Atoms for Peace" address to the General Assembly at its 470th plenary meeting, in 1953, stated the following:

> "It is not enough to take this weapon out of the hands of the soldiers. It must be put into the hands of those who will know how to strip its military casing and adapt it to the arts of peace."

It is imperative to place the "Atoms for Peace" paradigm, the founding spirit of the IAEA, at the centre of any future vision for the Agency. That can only be ensured through maintaining balance between the promotional activities of the Agency and its work in the areas of verification, nuclear safety and security. We should not lose sight of the fact that the IAEA's statutory mandate in the areas of verification, safety and security is aimed at facilitating the pursuit of the primary objective of the Agency, namely the promotion of peaceful uses of atomic energy.

It is essential that the IAEA, as one of the most efficient technical organizations in the United Nations system, maintain focus on its technical promotional character. The promotional activities of the Agency are best reflected in its Technical Cooperation Programme. This dynamic process of technical assistance has brought about tangible benefits to developing member States.

Pakistan has been one of the major beneficiaries of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme. The Agency has made a valuable contribution to the development of our peaceful nuclear programme. We would like to express our deep appreciation to the Department of Technical Cooperation for achieving a high rate of implementation, and for its excellent programme delivery.

For our part, we have made — and remain prepared to continue to make in the future — our contribution towards the Agency's promotional activities, by sharing our experience, offering training placements and providing the services of experts. As

one of the Agency's earliest member States, Pakistan has long been a strong advocate of promoting and harnessing nuclear technology for peace, progress and prosperity for all.

Pakistan has developed the entire range of nuclear fuel cycle facilities. We now have two nuclear power plants in operation, while a third is under construction. We have plans to establish a uranium conversion and enrichment facility to cater for the needs of our nuclear power plants. As announced already, Pakistan intends to place that facility under IAEA safeguards. We look forward to the IAEA's assistance in the completion of our nuclear power generation plan, including assistance in exploration and prospecting for uranium in the country, so that this clean source of power production is exploited to the maximum possible extent in the place of reliance on fossil fuels.

Parallel to the development of the nuclear fuel cycle, an extensive programme for the application of nuclear technology and radioisotopes in agriculture, hydrology and the medical and industrial sectors is also under way in Pakistan.

Since the foundation of its atomic energy development programme, Pakistan has always recognized that nuclear safety and security in both national and international contexts is a vital objective. Although the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) was established as an independent body in 2001, the genesis of the physical protection of nuclear facilities and security of nuclear and radioactive materials goes back decades to when safety and security were internally managed by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission.

In the area of nuclear security, Pakistan has always strived to follow the existing international standards. The IAEA document INFCIRC/225, entitled "The Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities", though a voluntary guidance for member States, has been used as a basis for inspection and enforcement in Pakistan. We are also following the guidance contained in the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and are participating in the IAEA's Illicit Trafficking Database.

The law establishing the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) mandates that body to ensure that appropriate measures for the physical protection of nuclear installations and nuclear materials are taken by all licensees. It also requires the Authority to ensure enforcement of regulations prohibiting unauthorized access to, possession of or use of nuclear and radioactive material and facilities containing such materials.

Since its establishment, the Authority has adopted a body of regulations and upgraded those that already existed to bring them into line with international standards on nuclear safety and security.

Since June 2006, the Authority has been implementing the national nuclear security action plan in Pakistan. The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority has used IAEA safety standards as the basis for national regulations to regulate nuclear installations and facilities. The Authority has established fruitful cooperation with the Agency and we deeply appreciate valuable assistance received from the Agency in the areas of nuclear safety and security. However, we urge the Agency to work out ways and means to facilitate transfers of safety-related technology. We also urge States with advanced nuclear technology to move beyond emphasizing the significance of nuclear safety and security and to take steps to remove unjustified restrictions on transfers of related technology and equipment in order to promote the objective of nuclear safety and security worldwide.

I would like to conclude by placing on record Pakistan's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. Our track record on IAEA safeguards has been immaculate and we have always fulfilled our obligations. We have effective controls in place on the export of goods, technologies and facilities related to nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. These controls meet existing international standards. On the basis of our moral and political commitment to its objectives, we believe that the global non-proliferation regime must be strengthened by the application of its norms in a non-selective, non-discriminatory and equitable manner.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, let me thank International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei for his comprehensive report and his statement on the recent major developments regarding the activities of the Agency.

We welcome the outcome of the fifty-second General Conference of the Agency held in Vienna between 29 September and 4 October 2008, including

the approval of the Sultanate of Oman, Kingdom of Lesotho and Papua New Guinea for membership of the Agency. We also welcome States that became members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2007, namely, Bahrain, Burundi, Cape Verde, Congo and Nepal.

The IAEA annual report for 2007, which marks 50 years of the Agency's indispensable and outstanding work, indicates that the Agency is continuing to develop its activities in many areas of nuclear technology of great interest and importance to the human community. We wholeheartedly support the need for the Agency to expand technical cooperation in the application of nuclear technology in the areas of food, agriculture, medicine and natural resources.

Today, we are going to adopt the annual draft resolution reaffirming the strong support of the General Assembly for the indispensable role of the IAEA in "encouraging and assisting the development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful uses, in technology transfer to developing countries and in nuclear safety, verification and security" (*A/63/L.6, para. 3*). Indeed, the role and goals of the Agency, which serves as one of the main instruments of the nuclear-weapon non-proliferation regime, cannot be overestimated. Unfortunately, the conflicts and threats in that area have not diminished.

The international community had failed to resolve disarmament and non-proliferation issues owing to the absence of consensus. The IAEA should play a leading role under the three pillars of its mandate to monitor the technology, safety and verification of nuclear use among nations. We support the strengthening of the Agency's function as a non-proliferation watchdog, verifying the production, possession, use and import and export of all nuclear material.

As a member of the Agency, Kazakhstan is undertaking effective measures to implement of its obligations to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, including the Additional Protocol to the Agreement on the Application of Safeguards between Kazakhstan and the IAEA. We are interested in deepening cooperation with the Agency to meet our intention to increase uranium production under strict IAEA control.

As the IAEA report indicates, continuing population growth and longer human lifespan are creating challenges for energy supply. The ongoing crises and disruption in energy security create a growing demand for nuclear energy. The latest IAEA projections estimate that global energy consumption will grow by 53 per cent by 2030, with 70 per cent of the growth coming from developing countries, where 17 of the 29 nuclear reactors currently under construction are located.

Kazakhstan possesses approximately 19 per cent of the world's explored uranium reserves, which is around 1.5 million tons. In 2007 uranium production in Kazakhstan was 6,637 tons; compared with the 5,281 tons produced in 2006, this represents a growth rate of 25.7 per cent. In 2008, we plan to produce approximately 9,600 tons of uranium. In that perspective, we plan to bring annual production of natural uranium to more than 15,000 tons by 2010, making Kazakhstan the world's leading uranium producer.

Taking those facts into account, the Government of Kazakhstan adopted a national programme of atomic energy development, which envisions the intensification of cooperation with the IAEA and its member States. With the expansion of nuclear activities in Kazakhstan, the Government is planning to create a special authority to coordinate national programmes for the peaceful use of atomic energy.

Kazakhstan is actively implementing the new edition of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources. Projects for strengthening controls on ionizing radiation sources and on safe and secure management of strong sources are being successfully implemented. Instruments have been prepared to introduce the national register of sources of ionizing radiation and an inventory of radioactive sources on Kazakhstan's territory is being carried out. In implementing these and other similar programmes, we are thankful for the support and effective assistance of the IAEA and countries taking part in the projects.

During the IAEA General Conference in Vienna this year, we organized an exhibition on Kazakhstan's renunciation of nuclear weapons, the seventeenth anniversary of the closing of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and the role of our country in strengthening the non-proliferation and nuclear material control regimes. That event also reflected Kazakhstan's nuclear-fuel-cycle capacity through the examples of the work being done at the Ulbinsk plant and at the research reactors of the National Nuclear Centre, as well as our

cooperation with foreign companies in the production of innovative and export-oriented materials.

From 18 to 22 May 2009, Kazakhstan will host the IAEA International Conference on Remediation of Land Contaminated by Radioactive Material/Residues. We also welcome the IAEA's readiness to work together with its partners in drafting a study, *Kazakhstan: a Country Profile on Sustainable Energy Development*.

With the support of our Government, the joint stock company Nuclear Technology Park has commenced operations in Kurchatov. It is expected to lay the groundwork for the development of applications for the peaceful uses of atomic energy, including nuclear power. Last year, a heavy-ion accelerator was launched at Astana, and the construction of the Kazakhstan tokamak for materials testing is currently under way in Kurchatov; the project is moving towards the fabrication and installation of basic equipment. A nuclear-medicine centre is being planned in Almaty, and its construction is also supported by the Government.

We welcome the conclusion, set out in the report under consideration, that in 2007 the nuclear industry continued to demonstrate a high level of safety and security around the world. Kazakhstan, while continuing to combat the nuclear threat, recognizes the right of any nation to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under strict international controls, in particular those of the IAEA. The Agency's comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols constitute its current verification standards. We call on States that have not yet brought into force their IAEA safeguards agreements or additional protocols to do so in an expeditious manner.

We must find ways to resolve the conflict situations that have recently arisen. Such means should not infringe on the right of countries to technological development or hamper their access to knowledge and should restore the confidence of the international community with regard to peaceful nuclear activities.

Kazakhstan is taking measures to strengthen border radiation monitoring and to further upgrade its system for combating the illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials. We have joined the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership initiative and signed a Statement of Principles during the second ministerial meeting of the Partnership, held on 16 September 2007 in Vienna. Our country fully agrees with the main principles of the Global Partnership and its vision of nuclear energy cooperation aimed at the safe and secure expansion of civilian nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We believe that the Partnership provides new momentum for the development of national nuclear and energy industries.

Kazakhstan fully complies with all commonly accepted norms in its export control policy. As a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, our country is taking effective measures to meet its obligation to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. A system for combating illicit nuclear trafficking has been established and is being improved on a day-to-day basis. At the same time, we call for thorough scrutiny of any new restrictions on the transfer of nuclear technologies, with a view to avoiding unjustified barriers to peaceful atomic development.

Mindful of the potential threat posed by highly enriched materials, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources of Kazakhstan has adopted a five-year programme to convert the VVR-K research reactor to low-enriched fuel. The safe decommissioning of the BN-350 fast breeder reactor in Aktau is also in progress.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm Kazakhstan's full support for the activities of the IAEA in accordance with article II of the Agency's statute, which states, "The Agency shall seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world".

Programme of work

The Acting President: I wish to inform members that the consideration of agenda item 104 (a), "Election of twenty members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination", scheduled for today, Monday, 27 October 2008, has been postponed to a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.